

THIS RULE WAS ADOPTED ON APRIL 2, 2003, AND BECOMES EFFECTIVE MAY 3, 2003. IT MAY BE USED TO DETERMINE TAX LIABILITY ON AND AFTER THE EFFECTIVE DATE, UNTIL THE CODIFIED VERSION IS AVAILABLE FROM THE CODE REVISER'S OFFICE.

NEW SECTION

WAC 458-16A-135 Senior citizen and disabled person exemption--Application procedures. (1) **Introduction.** This rule explains when and how a senior citizen or disabled person may apply for a property tax exemption on that person's principal residence. RCW 84.36.381 through 84.36.389.

(2) **When to apply for the exemption.** A claimant may first apply for the exemption in the calendar year that he or she meets the age or disability requirements for exemption of taxes due in the following year. If the claimant does not apply when he or she meets the age or disability requirements, then he or she may apply for the exemption in any subsequent year. The exemption may be claimed on his or her principal residence for previous years by applying with separate applications for each year. However, refunds based upon an exemption made in previous years may be refunded only for up to three years after the taxes were paid as provided in chapter 84.69 RCW.

(3) **Application required.** A claimant must submit to the county assessor's office an application for exemption with supporting documents. If the claimant applies for more than one year when the application is first made, an application must be made for each year the claimant seeks the exemption.

(4) **Where to obtain the application form.** A claimant may obtain the application form and the list of required supporting documents from the county assessor's office where his or her principal residence is located.

(5) **How to apply for the exemption.** Applications and supporting documents are filed in person or by mail at the county assessor's office where the principal residence is located.

(a) **The application form.** The county assessor designs the application form or adapts a master form obtained from the department. The county must obtain approval of the final form from the department before it may be distributed and used. The claimant must use an application form from the county where the principal residence is located and provide true and accurate information in the application.

(b) **Signatures.** The signature must certify that under penalty of perjury under the laws of Washington the application is true and correct. The application must be signed, dated, and state the place (city, county, or

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address) where it was signed. The application must be signed by:

- (i) The claimant;
- (ii) The claimant's designated agent;
- (iii) The legal guardian for the claimant (if applicable); or
- (iv) If the property is subject to a deed of trust, mortgage, or purchase contract requiring an accumulation of reserves to pay property taxes, the lien holder; and
- (v) If the claimant resides in a cooperative housing unit or portion of a cooperative structure representing the claimant's ownership share in that cooperative, the authorized agent of the cooperative must also sign the application.

(c) **Perjury statement.** The perjury statement certifying under the penalty of perjury that the application is true and correct must be placed upon the application immediately above a line for the signature. Any person signing a false claim with the intent to defraud or evade the payment of any tax commits perjury. If a person receives an exemption based on erroneous information, the assessor assesses any unpaid taxes with interest for up to three years. If a person receives an exemption based on erroneous information, and the person either provided that information with the intent to defraud or intentionally failed to correct that information, the assessor assesses any unpaid taxes with interest, for up to three years, with the one hundred percent penalty provided in RCW 84.40.130. RCW 84.36.385(5).

(d) **Cooperative agreement to reduce rent.** A cooperative must also agree, in a statement attached to the application, to reduce amounts owed by the claimant to the cooperative by the amount of the tax exemption. The agreement must also state that when the exemption exceeds the amount owed to the cooperative, the cooperative must pay to the claimant any amount of the tax exemption remaining after this offsetting reduction. RCW 84.36.387(5).

(e) **Supporting documents.** Unless the assessor determines that all or some of the supporting documents are not necessary, a claimant must present the documents listed below with his or her application. Except for affidavits, the assessor's office should not accept original documents from the claimant. If the assessor's office is presented with original documents (other than affidavits), they must

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make copies or note the information provided in the documents on a separate sheet and return these original documents to the claimant. The claimant submits the following documents with the application:

(i) If the county records do not reflect the claimant as the property owner, copies of any legal instruments demonstrating the claimant's interest held in the property;

(ii) Documents demonstrating that the property is the claimant's principal residence (i.e., copy of a driver's license and voter's registration card);

(iii) Copies of legal identification showing the claimant's age (i.e., copy of a driver's license or birth certificate);

(iv) If the claim is based upon a physical disability, either:

(A) An affidavit from a licensed physician (medical or osteopath doctor), a licensed or certified psychologist for disabling mental impairments, or a licensed podiatrist for disabling impairments of the foot, that states the claimant is unable to enter into regular gainful employment because of his or her physical disability and the expected term of the disability; or

(B) Copies of a written acknowledgment or decision by the Social Security Administration or Veterans Administration that the claimant is permanently physically disabled;

(v) Copies of documents showing income earned or reported by the claimant, the claimant's spouse and any cotenants, even when the income is estimated (income information should be provided to the degree possible and then confirmed with supporting documents in the follow-up period), such proof shall include to the extent it is relevant:

(A) If the claimant, the claimant's spouse, or any cotenants receive Social Security payments, a federal statement showing Social Security paid (generally, Form SSA-1099);

(B) If the claimant, the claimant's spouse, or any cotenants receive railroad retirement benefits, a federal statement showing railroad retirement benefits paid (generally, Forms RRC-1099 and RRC 1099-R);

(C) If the claimant, the claimant's spouse, or any cotenants file federal income tax returns, those returns with supporting forms, schedules, and, if specifically requested, worksheets for the deductions taken from gross

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income (generally, Form 1040 with its supporting forms and schedules);

(D) If the claimant or the claimant's spouse has been in a nursing home or receiving in-home care, copies of invoices (or an equivalent billing statement or payment statement) for nonreimbursed nursing home and in-home care;

(E) If the claimant indicates that the claimant's and the claimant's spouse's nonreimbursed prescription drugs for the period under review exceeds five hundred dollars, copies of checks or other payment statements (i.e., pharmacy printout of payments for purchases) showing amounts paid for nonreimbursed prescription drug expenses;

(F) If no federal returns were filed or received, the claimant must still provide copies of documents to demonstrate his or her income and the income of his or her spouse and any cotenants (i.e., federal income statements such as Form W-2 (wages), Form 1099-INT (interest), Form 1099-DIV (dividends), Form 1099-R (pension amounts), Form 1099-G (unemployment), or Form 1099-Misc. (contract income)). Even claimants who claim they have no federal income (or an inordinately small amount of federal income) must have income to maintain themselves and their residences. In these situations, the claimant must produce copies of documents demonstrating the source of the funds they are living on (i.e., checking account registers and bank statements) and the bills for maintaining the claimant and the residence (i.e., public assistance check stubs, utility invoices, cable TV invoices, check registers, bank statements, etc.); and

(vi) Any other copies of documents the assessor requires in his or her discretion for the claimant to produce in order to demonstrate the claimant qualifies for the exemption.

(f) Public disclosure of the application. The application form may not be disclosed. A copy of the application may be disclosed only if all income information on the form is obliterated so that it cannot be read. Except as required by law, no public disclosure may be made of the checklist of supporting documents or any supporting documents retained that concern the claimant's, the claimant's spouse's, or any cotenant's income.